



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana
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IM Weekly Highlights



- Powell County Sheriff Howard assisted IM Staff in correcting a power outage issue at the Cominco site, which affected network connectivity to the west.
- Purchase orders for the PSIC -2 microwave contract were issued. This project will upgrade the microwave connectivity from MacDonald Pass located in Lewis and Clark County to the Timberline site in Gallatin County.
- Lewis and Clark County has installed the server which will monitor the trunking system and is working on the final configuration to complete the project.
- Dale Osborne (MHP) assisted IM Staff with troubleshooting a coverage issue at the Pinkham site in Lincoln County.
- Functionality testing is scheduled to begin next week at several trunking sites in Gallatin County.

The IM Says "Good Bye" and "Thanks" to Roger Hays

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Roger Hays, former Radio Systems Administrator for Lewis and Clark County, will be sorely missed. Friday, March 26, was his last day with county. He is moving to New Mexico where he will be employed as a Motorola System Technologist.

"Roger worked incredible hours with Lewis and Clark County, the IM Project, and Motorola on getting the system working and also running interference when issues came up. His value to the IM Project was massive," said Jack Spillman, Flathead County's Radio System Administrator.

Last fall, Roger was named Technologist of the Year by the Montana Chapter of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) (See



Susan Bomstad, Roger Hays, and Bill Carrow, International APCO's President Elect as Roger accepts his award for APCO Technologist of the Year in Nov., 2009.

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-1-

Photo). He earned this honor because in addition to his daily management of radio equipment, frequencies and eight radio sites for the Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Office, he also actively assisted neighboring counties and those along the Northern Tier with technical expertise helpful to their deployment of the new digital trunked radio system.

This expertise took the form of advanced programming, fleet mapping services, and advice on infrastructure additions, site expansions and site improvements as necessary to ensure coverage and systems reliability. Moreover, he managed the Motorola Master Controller located in Helena.

"Roger's commitment to our radio system was demonstrated by his attitude and determination to bring great customer service to the public safety responders of Lewis and Clark County and the State of Montana," said Sheriff Leo Dutton, Lewis and Clark County. "He ended up donating many hours of his time to help other agencies and counties to establish safe communication in the public safety arena. His contributions to the IM Project over the past two years have been significant. We will miss him," Dutton said.

Big Sky 11 Meeting Informative

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Big Sky 11 Consortium covered a wide range of topics at its Thurs., March 25 meeting in Billings. Mike Linder, Yellowstone County Sheriff's Office, reported on the IM Technical Committee (IMTC) meeting and updated the group about changes in encryption standards and the request for a waiver to remain on the old standard. He also explained generator issues that a TWE Engineering representative addressed at the meeting. In May, work should commence on GPS marking and mapping for the Southern Loop.

The Dunn Mountain site also was discussed. Since it will not be able to be used as a microwave site due to mining subsidence, the consortium is examining other alternatives. As soon as mud and snow dry out at the Greeno and Coburn sites, construction work can resume.

Mike also announced that the next IMTC meeting will be in Billings on April 26 at the BLM offices, 5001 Southgate Drive.

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Project Director Floyd Fisher reported on the March IM Project Directors meeting and distributed copies of the new IM video, which may be viewed at <http://interop.mt.gov/video/video1.mcp.x>. He gave an in-depth review of cost information for site construction and maintenance, and members discussed funding options.

Anne Kindness, Communications Center Manager, reported on City of Billings' plans for its radio system upgrade. Work is taking place on talk group assessments and assignments, fleet mapping, funding proposals, and structural analysis of radio sites.

Under jurisdiction reports, Lisa Self indicated that the Winnett Fire Warden plans to apply for an Assistance to Fire Fighters radio grant. Ed Auker reported on the BIA build out and Sheriff Floyd Fisher reported on their Golden Valley radios.

The next Big Sky meeting is scheduled for Thurs., April 29 at 9:00 am for the Technical Committee Meeting and 10:00 am for the consortium meeting. The meeting place will be the Yellowstone County EOC at the Fire Station, 2305 8th Ave. North in Billings.

Distribution of Mobile Data Computers Announced

By Scott Bradford sbradford@mt.gov

The Mobile Data Terminal Consortium (MDT), under the leadership of Lewis and Clark County Sheriff Leo Dutton, voted Wed., March 31, to adopt a plan for the distribution of 103 Panasonic

... 103 Panasonic Toughbook® computers to 29 different law enforcement jurisdictions in Montana.

Distribution of these data computers, along with associated software, is part of the six million dollar Department of Justice COPS Technology Grant secured by PSSB in 2007. A majority of law enforcement, EMS and fire agencies in Montana do not have access to mobile data technology, which is a common tool in many areas of the country.

Distribution of these units will allow agencies with mobile data capability to upgrade their service and provide mechanisms for new access in rural areas. Agencies across the state, depending on location, will have options to subscribe to or use a commercial high-speed data network, the MDT-owned UHF narrowband network, or integrated voice/data technology with the Interoperability Montana (IM) trunked radio system.

Previously, the COPS grant has distributed over 1,130 radios and more than \$100,000 in radio upgrades for jurisdictions through the IM Project.

IM Funding Sub-Committee

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The IM Funding Sub-Committee reviewed the draft IM Business Plan at its Thurs., April 1, meeting in Helena. They also helped shape the agenda for the upcoming Blueprint for Excellence strategic planning session on April 21 and 22. Several important questions will be addressed at this session.

In addition, members learned about different legislative processes for funding requests and discussed potential non-legislative funding streams.

The next meeting will be Fri., April 23 at a time and location to be announced.

Upcoming Meetings

• Mon., April 5

Mutual Aid Handbook Fire Council
Bozeman • 11:00 am – 4:00 pm
Fire Department Station 3
1705 Vaquero Parkway

• Tues., April 13

Mutual Aid Handbook Law Enforcement Council
Helena • 9:00 am – noon
Mitchell Building, Room 223, 125 N. Roberts St.

• Wed., April 14

South Central Montana Consortium (SCIMC)
Big Timber • 10:00 am – noon
Carnegie Library, 314 McLeod St.

• Thurs., April 15

I-15/90 Corridor Consortium
Butte • 10:00 am – noon
Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St.

• Wed. & Thurs. April 21 & 22

Blueprint for Excellence
Strategic Planning Session – By invitation
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.

• Thurs. April 22

Montana Chapter of APCO
Miles City • 8:30 am – Committee Meetings
11:30 am – Chapter Meeting
Comfort Inn, 1615 South Haynes Ave.

• Mon., April 26

IM Technical Committee (IMTC)
Billings • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
BLM Offices, 5001 Southgate Drive

• Tues., April 27

State Agency Radio Users Task Force
Helena • 9:00 am - 11:00 pm
Old Livestock Building, 1310 E. Lockey Ave.